

MACTE Weekly Legislative Report
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House Education Policy Bill Completed. Last week, the House Education Policy Committee completed its work on HF 1711, the omnibus education policy bill. The committee met for four days to complete its work, first walking step by step through the bill, then taking testimony and asking follow up questions, and finally taking up nearly 30 amendments. I testified on behalf of MACTE, expressing our support for the provisions reflecting the work of the Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers in Minnesota; changes put forward by PELSB to make some changes to board membership and operations; and the provisions of HF 1329 revising the tiered licensure structure. Efforts to delete or revise some of these changes were defeated, and the final bill is one that clearly reflects our priorities to retain high quality licensure standards and increase the diversity of teachers in Minnesota classrooms. The bill will likely be taken up next by the House Education Finance Division.

Senate Takes Up Licensure Bill. Last Wednesday, the Senate E-12 Finance and Policy Committee took up SF 1557, the companion to HF 1329, authored by Senator Susan Kent. Laura Mogelson testified on behalf of MACTE, sharing in particular our support for the proposed changes to Tier 2 and Tier 3 licensure. As in the House hearing on the companion bill, there were a significant number of testifiers speaking both in support of and in opposition to the provisions in the bill. At the end of the hearing, the committee amended the bill and then laid it on the table for possible inclusion in the omnibus bill, which means that it could, but will not necessarily, be included in part or in full in the Senate omnibus education bill. Given the positions of many on the committee, it seems unlikely that the provisions we favor will become part of the omnibus bill but we will continue to follow the work of this committee as it moves toward the next committee deadline on Friday, 3.29. Please stay tuned for possible “calls to action” next week and beyond.

What Lies Ahead. As the session passes the midpoint of the session and deadlines for committee action pass, the focus becomes less on new bills (many of which at this point can be introduced and discussed but increasingly not voted on) and more on the development and action on omnibus bills. Policy bill deadlines come first, followed by funding bill deadlines. Fewer committees meet but those that remain active often meet in longer sessions before bills move to the floors of each body and finally to conference committees. This year, some guidelines for conference committee work have been put into place that may make the end of session more transparent and less hectic. As a reminder, the legislature will take an Easter/Passover break from 4.13 through 4.22 and will adjourn on 5.20.

Correction. Thanks to Paul Spies for noting that I mischaracterized a bill taken up last week in the House Education Finance Division. HF 2207 is the Governor’s E-12 Finance Bill, not the omnibus finance bill. I didn’t say what I meant and am grateful to know that someone is reading my weekly reports carefully enough to point out errors!